

Charles Schulz went by the nickname "Sparky," a tribute from his comic-loving father to another popular comic strip character of the day. The young boy's interest in cartooning first took hold about the time Charles was six, and was spurred after his graduation from St. Paul Central High by a correspondence course ad that read "Do you like to draw?" His parents paid the \$170 tuition in installments, although they may have questioned their investment when the class on drawing children netted Charles a grade of just C-plus.

After serving as an army tailgunner in Europe, Charles Schulz returned to Minnesota and earned his first paycheck as a cartoonist by working on a Catholic magazine feature. He also taught art, and sold 15 cartoons to the Saturday Evening Post. He created his first feature for the St. Paul Pioneer Press in 1947. "L'il Folks" was brought in 1950 by United Feature Syndicate, christened with a new name, and Charlie Brown and "Peanuts" debuted on October 2 in seven newspapers. Two days later, Snoopy was introduced to the world.

A phenomenon was born.

More than a few books, college theses, and critical essays have tried to dissect the popularity of "Peanuts." Maybe Charles Schultz himself had the best answer when in a 1994 speech he said, "There is still a market for things that are clean and decent."

I have always thought that the "Peanuts" gang endured because the characters were so strongly developed and so genuine that we saw something we could identify with in each of them.

Snoopy was the dreamer, persistently straddling his doghouse in pursuit of the Red Baron.

Lucy, dispensing nickel douses of pop psychology, took great pride in her crabbiness.

Woodstock was the accident prone one.

Peppermint Patty struggled in the classroom, but never struggled on the baseball field.

Linus made it all right for us to need a security blanket from time to time.

Sally, the loveable younger sister, wanted to believe in Santa Claus and the Great Pumpkin.

Schroeder was the unapologetic artist who loved his music.

Pig Pen* * * well, I think we all know a Pig Pen.

And Charlie Brown, "the little round-headed kid," was Everyman. We relate to him because at some point in our lives, we all pined for a little red-haired girl * * * were menaced by a kite-Eating Tree * * * and faced down a football we were certain would be snatched away at the last moment. Charlie Brown's perpetually upbeat search for happiness was our search, too.

"As a youngster, I didn't realize how many Charlie Browns there were in the world," Charles Schulz said. "I thought I was the only one. Now I realize that

Charlie Brown's goofs are familiar to everybody, children and adults alike." No wonder he considered Charlie Brown his alter ego. "There is a lot of myself in his character, too," he said.

In his art, Charles Schulz could be tender, insightful, sometimes sarcastic, heartbreaking, hilarious, and occasionally sentimental. Always, his work was centered in a deep spirituality. Though it occasionally drove his fans mad, there was a practical reason why his comics were frequently tinged with pathos. In his 1980 book, "Charlie Brown, Snoopy and Me," the artist wrote, "You can't create humor out of happiness. I'm astonished at the number of people who write to me saying, 'Why can't you create happy stories for us? Why does Charlie Brown always have to lose? Why can't you let him kick the football?' Well, there is nothing funny about the person who gets to kick the football."

Mr. President, I am proud to co-sponsor legislation offered by my colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, to award Charles Schulz the Congressional Gold Medal. I am pleased our colleagues in the House have already adopted this resolution. While I wish we had accorded the cartoonist this great honor in his lifetime, I know that Charles Schulz did not need the endorsement of this Congress to be fulfilled in his work, for how can a congressional honor compare with the love shown to him by his millions of faithful fans?

Minnesotans have always considered Charles Schulz one of us, even though he eventually moved to Santa Rosa, California, where he made his home with his wife Jeannie. He was blessed with five children, two stepchildren, and several grandchildren, and our prayers are with them all.

Mr. President, Charles Schulz fretted that his work as a cartoonist would never be considered great art and would certainly not stand the test of time.

With all due respect to the cartoonist I honor today, my two-word response to that is "Good grief!" Charlie Brown will undoubtedly live on long after the rest of us are forgotten. And that, I would argue, is exactly the way things are supposed to be.●

A HEROIC GIFT OF LIFE

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to inform my colleagues of a recent act of great charity by one of my constituents, Ms. Debbie Laakso of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In an astonishing act of kindness, the single mother of four donated a kidney to her friend and former boss, Verle Jucht. The odd twist is that Debbie and Verle met at John Morrell and Company where Verle was Debbie's supervisor. Though they separated as colleagues in 1993, they surprisingly remained friends for the last six years. When Verle's kidney began to fail last year, Debbie gave him hers. Knowing

her jovial nature, Verle and his wife, Colleen, thought their old friend was kidding when she first offered to donate.

Luckily, Debbie and Verle were a match, and after surgery last November, both are doing well. This story, Mr. President, is a great testament to the truly good and giving nature of people. I rise today to thank Debbie Laakso for her good nature and good humor and to congratulate her and Verle Jucht on their bravery and courage. Debbie serves as a model of goodness and friendship for all Americans, and their story is an account for all of the importance of the "Gift of Life."●

RELEASE OF SONG YONGYI

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the safe return of Song Yongyi to his home and family in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Mr. Song, Librarian at Dickinson College, was recently freed from a Chinese detention center after a detainment of 172 days.

Mr. Song was born on December 15, 1949 in Shanghai where he attended elementary and middle school. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, his education was interrupted and Mr. Song became a dockworker. In 1971 he was detained and labeled a "counter-revolutionary" for organizing a book club with four other young people interested in discussing political ideas. Mr. Song spent five years in detention under harsh conditions, where he was severely beaten, resulting in permanent damage to his health. After the Cultural Revolution, he was completely exonerated of all criminal charges.

In 1977 Mr. Song was part of an elite group of students who entered university as a result of a competitive, nationwide examination. He graduated from Shanghai Normal University in 1981. He taught Chinese literature for Shanghai educational television until 1987, at which time he became a full-time literary critic and widely recognized researcher. Mr. Song moved to the United States in 1989 and enrolled in graduate school at the University of Colorado, where his wife Helen (Xiaohua) and daughter Michelle (Xiaoxiao) joined him in 1990. After obtaining a second masters degree in library information science from Indiana University, the Song family moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where Song Yongyi is employed as Librarian at Dickinson College.

Mr. Song's deep interest in the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution and growing prominence as an expert in the field led him to make research trips to China in the summers of 1998 and 1999. As part of his research, Mr. Song collected documents concerning the Cultural Revolution, which are widely available in markets and curio shops. It was during this most recent visit to China that state security officials detained Mr. and Mrs. Song in Beijing on August 7. For about one month, Yongyi and

Helen were held in a detention center in Beijing and interrogated. They were not allowed to see each other or communicate with the outside world. Later they were moved to a facility where conditions were less harsh and were finally permitted to speak with each other. Helen was released from custody on November 16 and allowed to return home to Carlisle, but Yongyi remained in detention. On December 24, Song Yongyi was arrested and charged with the "purchase and illegal provision of intelligence to foreign people."

Mr. Song's arrest generated an outpouring of support from scholars in the United States and abroad, as well as from politicians. As of result of the vigorous campaign to secure Mr. Song's release, the Chinese government announced their decision to free Song Yongyi.

On behalf of the many Pennsylvanians who diligently kept the Song family in their thoughts and prayers, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes on the safe return of Song Yongyi.●

HATS OFF TO THE ALL-STAR RESEARCH TEAM AT NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

● Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, well over a decade ago, plant pathologists at North Dakota State University's Agricultural Experiment Station observed signs of a plant disease called Fusarium Head Blight—more commonly known as scab—in a few of the region's wheat fields. Upon this discovery, the researchers swung into action, not knowing they were about to do battle with an insidious plant disease which would eventually devastate wheat fields across the Northern Plains during the 1990s. Since 1993, scab has been an ever present scourge. Losses to the region's farmers from this cereal crop disease have been estimated to be as high as \$2.6 billion during the last decade, the most costly plant disease outbreak ever in the United States.

Earlier this month, though, some good news was delivered on this front by those researchers who have battled this disease for so long. The North Dakota State University Agricultural Experiment Station announced the release of a new scab resistant spring wheat variety named Alsen. The new variety is named after the town of Alsen, located on route 66 in Northeastern North Dakota, an area which was particularly hard hit by this disease.

The researchers say that while this variety is not immune to scab, it can fight off the disease. This is excellent progress and welcome news. And, while this is the first spring wheat variety to exhibit scab resistance, it certainly won't be the last.

My hat is off to these researchers from North Dakota State University! There are many long, tedious, and unglamorous hours involved in cross-breeding wheat plants. The farmers of

the region will be served well by this research, and it is proper and fitting that we recognize the dedicated efforts of those who have contributed their life's work to combat this disease which threatens the livelihood of our producers.

On behalf of all who are involved with, or impacted by, the agricultural economy of the Northern Plains—which includes just about everyone living in the region—I am proud to be able to take this opportunity to say thank you for a job well done to the researchers and support staff of the North Dakota State University Agricultural Experiment Station.●

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA BUSCH

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an American who has given graciously and unselfishly to her country. For over 36 years, Barbara Busch served this nation with great distinction in her many different capacities at the U.S. Peace Corps: from a staff assistant when she first began in 1964, to Executive Officer of the Recruitment and Communications Division, to Chief of Operations of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, to Acting Director of the Peace Corps. It is truly a story of hard work and dedication.

Barbara retired from public service just under one month ago. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate her for a remarkable career and wish her well as she moves on to the next stage of her life. She leaves the Peace Corps with a better understanding of its importance and its role in the world than anyone that comes to mind. She will be greatly missed.

When I had the privilege to serve as Peace Corps Director, Barbara was working in the Office of Planning, Budget, and Finance. She was a diligent worker, excellent manager, and had a wonderful rapport with Peace Corps volunteers and returned volunteers alike. She was one of the few, courageous supporters of World Wise Schools, an innovative global education program that provides students in the United States with a view of life in countries around the globe. Since its inception in 1989, more than a million students in all 50 states have "put a face on a place" through World Wise Schools.

Back in 1964, when Barbara began her service, the Peace Corps was operating in 48 countries. Today, after her 36 years, the Peace Corps has 7,000 volunteers in 78 countries around the globe. It is because of dedicated public servants like Barbara that the Peace Corps continues to build on its distinguished record of service and continues to provide unique leadership around the world. There is no doubt that Barbara embodies the very spirit of the Peace Corps: a strong work ethic, generosity of spirit, and a commitment to service—the finest characteristics of the American people.

The Peace Corps continues to be the most successful program of its kind precisely because of its commitment to serving others. It is this legacy of service and commitment to others that Barbara leaves behind and for which she will be remembered.●

THE HONORABLE IKRAM U. KHAN, M.D.

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my good friend, the Honorable Ikram U. Khan, M.D.

I have had the honor of knowing Ikram for several years and I am fortunate we have developed a good friendship. Because of that friendship, I am doubly pleased that Ikram has been appointed by President Clinton to the Board of Regents for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

This is an extremely prestigious appointment, one that Ikram richly deserves. During his twenty-one years of private practice, he has served not only his patients and the institution of medicine, but also his community and state. He has been honored by his hometown of Las Vegas and various local organizations for his community service and achievements. He has been nominated to serve on Nevada's State Board of Medical Examiners and on the state Legislature's Health Care Cost Containment committee. On the national scene, Congresswoman Barbara Vucanovich, in 1993, asked Ikram to advise her on health care delivery issues specific to Medicare, and President Clinton, in 1995, recognized Ikram for his health care reform efforts. He is a very fine man, and his years of dedication to military medicine and to the health industry in general ensures he will perform a great service in this position.

Mr. President, I would like to again congratulate my friend, Dr. Ikram Khan, on his appointment to the Board of Regents and wish him the best on his new challenges managing the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. I trust the University and Secretary Cohen will find him a valuable asset and a skilled adviser.●

NATIONAL HEART FAILURE AWARENESS WEEK

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, on February 10th, I phoned in a request to become a cosponsor of S. Res. 256, a resolution designating the week of February 14 through 18, 2000, as "National Heart Failure Awareness Week". Unfortunately, my name was inadvertently not included in the list of cosponsors at that time. Hence, I ask unanimous consent that the RECORD reflect my support and cosponsorship of the resolution.

Mr. President, I cosponsored this important resolution because it will help to promote research related to all aspects of heart failure and enhance the quality and duration of life for those